

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 and 23-30 are pending in the application. Claims 5, 7-21, and 24 are allowed.

Claims 1-4, 6, and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by previously-cited Yamakita et al. (US 6,285,780, hereafter “Yamakita”). Claims 25-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Yamakita in view of Applicants’ Admitted Prior Art (AAPA).

Once again, the rejection of claims 1-4, 6, and 23 is essentially the same as in the previous Office Action, although the Examiner has provided additional comments in the Response to Arguments. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections with the following comments.

Regarding claims 1-4, 6, and 23, the Examiner asserts that Yamakita discloses “an image processor in which an image signal is read, an iridial granule is extracted on the reading side, providing a normalization processing condition used in the subsequent processing.” Page 2 of the Office Action. Applicants submit that the system of Yamakita does not include the “reading side normalization processing condition determining means” that determines a normalization processing condition on the reading side. The reading side in Yamakita consists of either the eye region image pick-up unit 1 alone, or the eye region image pick-up unit 1 and the iridial granule segmenting unit 2. That is, what is obtained on the reading side alone in Yamakita is the eye region image or the iridial granule (i.e., a mere segmentation of the image). Neither of these elements of Yamakita can be considered as the “normalization processing condition.”

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The Examiner asserts in the “Response to Arguments” at the bottom of page 4 of the Final Office Action that parameters are determined based on the iridial granule and those parameters are used for normalization. Even if that assertion were considered to be correct, the process of determining the parameters is carried out by the geometric normalizer 3 on the receiving side. Thus, in Yamakita, no normalization processing condition is determined on the reading side.

Therefore, claims 1-4, 6, and 23 are allowable over the prior art, for at least this reason.

Furthermore, even assuming *arguendo* that the Examiner is correct that Yamakita discloses “providing a normalization processing condition,” claims 1-4, 6, and 23 do not recite “providing a normalization processing condition.” Instead, claims 1-4 and 6 recite a reading side normalization processing condition determining means for determining a normalization processing condition. Analogously, claim 23 recites an image reading apparatus comprising reading means for reading an image to obtain image data representing the image and normalization processing condition determining means for determining a normalization processing condition for the image read by the reading means. Even the Examiner’s own words implicitly indicate that the reference fails to disclose these features. That is, the Examiner asserts that an iridial granule is extracted on the reading side, providing a normalization processing condition used in the subsequent processing. Thus, Applicants submit that Yamakita does not disclose these features of the claims.

Applicants further submit that Yamakita fails to disclose that the iridial granule provides a normalization processing condition, as asserted by the Examiner. Rather, the iridial granule is simply a part of the image of the eye taken by the image input device of Yamakita. The iridial

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granule does not provide a normalization processing condition. Instead, the device of Yamakita processes the iridial granule on the receiving side to obtain geometric and density normalization.

In the Response to Arguments, the Examiner asserts that col. 13, lines 23-42 and 58-63 of Yamakita disclose the features of claim 1, but Applicants disagree. The cited excerpts describe the coordinate transformation process of the geometric normalizer 3, indicating which characteristics of the image correspond to which symbols, e.g., the image matrix holder is designated as Pxy. However, the cited excerpts do not disclose a reading side normalization processing condition determining means for determining a normalization processing condition. Moreover, the geometric normalizer 3 is on the receiving side of the apparatus, not the reading side. Thus, the geometric normalizer 3 does not correspond to the reading side normalization processing condition determining means for determining a normalization processing condition. The Examiner asserts that the processor of Yamakita uses parameters determined by the iridial granule, but the iridial granule is simply a portion of the image of the eye. Thus, the iridial granule has certain characteristics, but the iridial granule does not determine a normalization processing condition.

Based on the foregoing, claims 1-4, 6, and 23 are allowable over the prior art.

With further regard to claim 2, the Examiner interprets the iridial granule to correspond to reduced image data. See Response to Arguments, page 5. However, the “reduced image” represented by the reduced image data of claim 2 refers to a reduced image (i.e., downsized image) of an entire image. A mere partial image extracted from an entire image, such as the iridial granule in Yamakita, is not a “reduced image” as described in claim 2. Herein, outputting the reduced image data has an advantage of shortening an operation time for determining the no

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motivation processing condition on the receiving side. Hence, claim 2 is allowable for this additional reason.

Further, regarding claims 3 and 6, Applicants submit that Yamakita does not disclose the “condition changing means.” The Examiner’s response on claim 3 concedes a deficiency that Yamakita does not change the normalization condition. In Yamakita, any purported normalization values are calculated over a range of pixel values, but do not become changed once determined for the image. There also is no subsequent processing based on the changed normalization as described by claims 3 and 6. Additionally, no element in Yamakita can act as the means for changing the normalization processing condition provided from the reading side, because the normalization processing condition itself is not determined nor output on the reading side. Thus, claims 3 and 6 are allowable for this reason too.

With respect to the Examiner’s argument that claims 4 and 6 do not require that a parameter of the image reading apparatus is taken into account, the Examiner is correct in that claims 4 and 6 do not explicitly recite such a limitation. However, the Examiner contends that a “characteristic” of the image data may comprise the recited parameter. As claimed, the parameter is used at the receive side for normalization. Applicants submit that to the extent Yamakita teaches a receive side normalization as distinct from the read side, there is no common parameter developed at the read side further used in conjunction with separately recited image data to obtain the normalization at the receive side.

With further regard to claim 23, the Examiner asserts that the iridial granule is readable on either the reduced image data or the normalization processing condition. Here, Applicants submit that the iridial granule does not correspond to a normalization processing condition, nor

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the reduced image data. Rather, the iridial granule is a portion of the image of the eye. For this reason, as well as the above-noted reasons, claim 23 is allowable.

Claims 25-30 are rejected as allegedly being obvious over Yamakita in view of AAPA. The Examiner asserts that simply because a radiation image stored on a stimuable phosphor sheet is known in the art, that it would have been obvious to have modified Yamakita to include such a feature. However, the Examiner has not identified any suggestion or motivation to make such a modification, and Applicants submit that there is no such suggestion or motivation.

Yamakita describes taking a picture of the eye of a horse and then processing the picture. See col. 8, line 64 – col. 9, line 46. As described in this excerpt, the image input portion of the apparatus corresponds to a CCD video camera and an illumination unit. The idea of using a radiation image stored on a stimuable phosphor sheet is not present in Yamakita. The use of a CCD video camera is quite different from a radiation image stored on a stimuable phosphor sheet. Furthermore, modifying Yamakita to include a radiation image stored on a stimuable phosphor sheet would change the principle of operation of Yamakita's device, which is intended to use an image input device such as a CCD video camera to obtain input images.

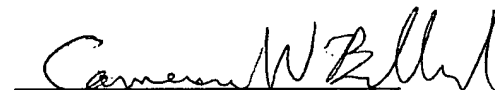
Therefore, Applicants submit that claims 25-30 are allowable over the prior art. Furthermore, claims 25-30 are allowable due to their dependence from claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 23, respectively.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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Respectfully submitted,



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